GREATER BOBS & CROW LAKES ASSOCIATION

Lake Views

Greater Bobs and Crow Lakes Association Magazine

Spring/Summer 2026



Photo by: Brooke Ellsworth

"Everything good, everything magical happens between the months of June and August."

Jenny Han

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Message from the Board of Directors
The Greater Bobs and Crow Lakes Association (GBCLA)

It is spring on Bobs and Crow Lakes! The phoebes are flitting about preparing their nest under our deck. Hope springs eternal. They don't remember last year when there were no hatchlings thanks to the gray rat snake, or the year that the blue jay raided their nest. On the home front, my hubby is running around fixing leaks in the plumbing and cursing the moss that has invaded the grass over the septic tank. In short, it is a normal spring at the lake.

The Greater Bobs and Crow Lakes Association continues to be actively working on behalf of our members. The fisheries committee has just completed its annual walleye count with good results. Dan Kano has reported on the activities of this committee.

Marine Safety continues to be a focus of the association and, as Dick Johnston reports, there are changes in legislation that require Pleasure Craft Licenses to be renewed every five years. It is easy to check on the Transport Canada website to find out when your license is due for renewal.

Jeff and Bonnie Carabott have monitored water quality on the lakes for many years and have submitted a report on the results for 2025. Jeff also has authored an interesting article on what to look for in the night skies this summer.

Last summer was a challenging year for fires given the severe drought we experienced. Our fire department was kept very busy, and some cottages were lost to fire. As I write this, our amazing volunteer Fire Department is fighting a wildfire at Hwy.# 38 and Bradshaw Road. It is an ever-present danger. Chief Del Blakeney has requested that we include information on What3Words, a valuable location resource.

A joint committee of members from the GBCLA and the Bobs and Crow Lake Foundation chaired by our Director of Cottage Safety, Kathy Yach, continues to meet to discuss ways of mitigating wildfire on our lakes. They hope to have a proposal ready for our Annual General Meeting.

Starting last fall, a committee has been exploring the issue of invasive species on our lakes. The group was brought together by the Director of Lake Stewardship, Peter Thorp-Levitt and is capably chaired by Anne Craig and has an enthusiastic



Phoebe bird at the lake

membership. Heather Smith Fowler provides a short summary of the committee's goals. Peter muses about the possibility of Bobs and Crow Lakes being the next "Blue Zone".

The GBCLA is a proud member of the Federation of Cottage Associations (FOCA) and they have willingly agreed to let us publish some of their material: "5 Things Your Kids Need Before Driving a Boat" and "Aquatic Plants".

We are always interested in hearing from our cottagers on their experiences of the lakes. Larry Walsh has memories of times spent at Bobs visiting Howard's Camp and then returning to Irwin's Cabins. Peri McQuay, a local Kingston author, writes eloquently about her property on Bobs and Carolyn McGrath imagines if she could redesign herself.

With the help of Bruce Elliott, of New Phase Marketing Intelligence, we have refreshed our website and continue to make incremental changes to make it more user friendly. With assistance from Nadine Picard of Irwin's cabins we have been working away at make the site more relevant. Now you can renew your membership on your cell phone, thanks to recent improvements.

Throughout this magazine, you will find ads placed by our local business members. They support us by taking out a membership. We urge you to support them by engaging their services and buying local.

Lynn Watson, Editor
The Greater Bobs and Crow Lakes Association

Information and Updates

GREATER BOBS & CROW LAKES ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Greater Bobs and Crow Lakes Association
Sunday, July 19th, 2026
Bedford Community Hall, Westport Road

12:00 lunch, 1:00 speakers, 2:00 AGM

Protect Opinicon Decision

On April 2nd, 2026, Reade Davis of Protect Opinicon Inc. shared the findings of the Ontario Land Tribunal on the appeal made last year. Here is the conclusion taken directly from that report:

CONCLUSION [61] Plainly, the Appellant proposed to almost triple their number of guests without completing the basic requirement of a properly scoped environmental impact study – one that includes the entire Subject Property, not just the east parcel. The EIS also suffered from other flaws, detailed above. The Tribunal therefore finds the Appellant failed to demonstrate the proposed development would have no negative impacts on natural heritage features or their ecological functions. Accordingly, the OPA and ZBA are not consistent with the PPS. ORDER [62] THE TRIBUNAL ORDERS THAT the appeals are dismissed and the requested amendments to the Official Plan for the Township of South Frontenac and By-law No. 2003-75 are refused. "F. Lavoie"

Lynn Watson, Director of Communications/Acting President



Lake Stewardship

GBCLA Taking Action on Invasive Species

By: Heather Smith Fowler

What do zebra mussels, Eurasian milfoil, spongy moths, Asian jumping worms, and hemlock woolly adelgid have in common? They're all organisms invasive to Ontario that can wreak havoc on the ecosystems of Bobs and Crow lakes.

Whether they're airborne, on land, or in the water, these species threaten our trees, shorelines, water quality, and native fish, plants, and animals. They also drive up costs for property owners and communities through damage to crops, clogged boat motors and intake pipes, lost business, and remediation. Last year's survey of lake property owners confirmed that many of you are deeply concerned about invasive species in our area.

The good news? A small group of concerned GBCLA members has come together to learn more about these and other invasive species in our area, find solutions, and coordinate action. We've met three times over the past few months to map out who else is working on this issue (e.g., the Invasive Species Centre, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Federation of Cottage Associations) and how, so we can decide where best to focus our time and energy. We're exploring options such as 'how-to guides for property owners,' boat washing stations, and other ideas.

If you'd like to be part of this initiative in any way – whether by helping with shoreline surveys, sharing information with your neighbours, or simply staying informed - please contact Anne Craig (anne.kyleakin@sympatico.ca), Lynn Watson (lynnwatson@gto.net), or Peter Thorp-Levitt (freetownpete@rogers.com).

As a first step, here are a few simple things you can do now to reduce the spread of invasive species:

- **Clean, drain, and dry your boat, trailer, and gear** every time you move between lakes
- **Never move firewood** – Buy and burn it locally to avoid spreading pests
- **Learn to recognize a few priority invaders**, like zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil, and report sightings to the Ontario Invasive Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711 or by email at: info@invadingspecies.com
- **Choose non-invasive – preferably native - plants** for gardens and shorelines, and remove invasive ornamentals where possible.

We will be sharing information with you soon about our ideas and next steps – stay tuned!

Feeling Blue

By: Peter Thorp-Levitt, Director of Stewardship

If you are feeling blue, that is ok because it could mean you are thriving. That sounds counter intuitive but living in one of the internationally recognized Blue Zones has been documented to extend human life and improve its quality. This article will explain what a Blue Zone is and with a little luck, draw comparisons to how a healthy lake ecosystem may contribute to your living a long and healthy life.

According to the Harvard Medical School (September 1st, 2025) a Blue Zone has the highest concentration of people who are 100 years old or older and have few instances of chronic disease, including dementia. There are five uniquely healthy living environments in the world called Blue Zones. These include Okinawa, Japan; Ikaria, Greece; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya, Costa Rica; and Loma Linda, California. While these locations sound exotic and expensive, there are routines that we can adopt here at the lake to help us thrive and live longer, such as:

1. **Food:** eat a plant-based diet that is rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains, while limiting meat consumption. Apples grow wild in our region and fish are still plentiful. If you import some soil, compost heavily or are fortunate enough to have good loam on your property, you are set to grow enough of the right kind of food. (Deer and rodents not withstanding)
2. **Movement:** Gardening is an excellent form of physical activity, as is walking, rowing and general cottage maintenance. There are many well-maintained trails in our area, including the K&P, Cataraqui and Trans Canada Trails, so please use them. Try forest bathing while you are out there! Oh, and the lake beckons us all to swimming.
3. **Community:** The cottage is a wonderful place to invite family, friends, and neighbours too. If this is not a routine part of your cottage lifestyle, why not start now? You can also get involved in a local church, reading club or your lake association to build healthy social networks, help strengthen family ties and build a sense of community.
4. **Purpose:** Involvement in something joyful is motivating and purposeful. It can reinforce our identity as useful individuals by engaging our natural gifting in useful activities. This fosters purpose and gives our lives meaning.
5. **Stress management:** There is good and bad stress. Our aim should be to reduce or eliminate bad stress through relaxing activities such as meditation, prayer, napping, and spending time with loved ones. (Boston Medical Center - October 9th, 2025). We can easily do this at the lake if we set healthy lifestyle boundaries.

These are five ways to help us age well while having fun. All can be included in our daily routines while at home or at the cottage. However, a clean and inviting lake environment like ours can be one of the best ways to achieve a long and healthy life.

Our lakes could be the next Blue Zone.

Aquatic Plants

Printed with permission from FOCA.



Photo by Mark Olsen on Unsplash

So, what's living in your lake? Lots of things do! Insects, fish, frogs, turtles, ducks, muskrats and other creatures, together with rooted and floating pants, algae, fungi, bacteria and larger invertebrates make up an ecosystem, the web of interactions between living organisms and their physical environment.

Limnology is the study of the interactions between all the living and non-living elements of a lake system. The creatures found in and around lakes are affected by things like water chemistry, hydrology (water inputs and outflows) and interactions with other biota (life forms), including us.

Aquatic plants are also called macrophytes by scientists. Macrophytes grow in or near the water and are sometimes generically called 'weeds'. They range in shape and size, can be seen with the naked eye (no microscope needed), and have vascular systems – like humans do – that transport oxygen, carbon dioxide and nutrients to all parts of the plant. Macrophytes are photosynthetic, meaning they use energy captured from sunlight to produce the sugars they need to live. If you've ever waded into an Ontario lake, you've likely come into direct contact with macrophytes!

Some people are perturbed when the aquatic leaves tickle their feet from beneath the surface of the water; others of us don't mind so much because – regardless of some of their perceptually 'icky' attributes, these plants are harmless to touch and are essential to life in the lake.

You can learn more about aquatic plants with FOCA's Aquatic Plants Guide.





Fisheries

Walleye Spawn Survey & Habitat Initiatives

By: Dan Kano, Director of Fisheries

The GBCLA Fisheries Committee once again organized and monitored the annual walleye spawning activity across several key creeks. Over a three-week period, volunteers conducted nightly fish counts with each session lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Contributing their valuable time were: Duane Meeks, Jim and Colette McIntosh, Al McNichols, Paul and Natalie Gagnon, Nicholas Gagnon, Steve Finlay, Dave Naboznak, and Dan Kano.

As always, safety remained a top priority, with volunteers counting in pairs due to challenging creek-side conditions, particularly at night.

A Strong Rebound Year

The 2026 spawning season has proven to be a **strong rebound year**, following a reduced count in 2025.

This spring we counted an estimated 658 walleye, up 70% compared to last year and up 30% from 2024. This rebound suggests that the dip observed in 2025 was likely driven by environmental and seasonal conditions rather than a sustained population decline. It should be noted that the conducted walleye spawn count is not scientific in nature, but instead, a generalized data collection process refined by consistent and collaborative efforts.



Creek Bed Habitat: Typical rocky substrate and flow conditions observed in spawning areas.

Also, contributing to the higher count was a record-setting 24 days of observed spawning activity, the longest duration on record.

Notable Dates:

March 27	First nightly monitoring
April 4	First Walleye spotted, weather 3C degrees, water temps 36F
March 31 – April 10	Weather conditions between -1C to +10C degrees
March 27 - April 19	An estimated increase of 16.5” of water depth
April 27	Last day of count

Last Year Challenges

The 2025 season was heavily impacted by:

- Extremely high water levels
- Fast creek flows
- Fluctuating temperatures
- Colder than usual environmental conditions

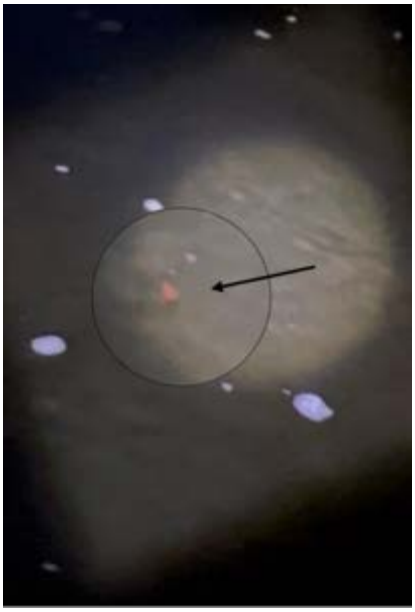
These conditions contributed to a sharp decline in observed fish counts compared to 2024 and likely affected both spawning behaviour and visibility during surveys.



Volunteers conducting shoreline observations under low-light conditions — a critical part of accurate spawn monitoring.



Walleye visibility during spawning — note highlighted fish within survey light beam.



These glowing red/pink dots deeper in the creek are the eyes of the walleye reflecting the brightness of the spotlight.

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Fisheries Committee Projects – 2026

The Fisheries Committee is expanding its efforts through **hands-on habitat improvement initiatives**.

Christmas Tree Habitat Pilot Project:

This new initiative focuses on enhancing fish habitat by repurposing discarded Christmas trees into structured underwater cover.

Objective

To improve habitat complexity and support walleye population recovery, while benefiting a wide range of aquatic species.

Project Overview

- Trees collected shortly after the holiday season
- Bundled and submerged in pre-defined lake locations
- Aimed at improving habitat for multiple fish species, with the focus on Walleye

Timeline

- May 2026: Pre-scouting and site mapping (with RVCA support)
- September 2026: Tree placement event

Site Selection

- Target depths: 10–20 feet, ideal for walleye
- Locations: Across Bobs Lake and Crow Lake
- Selected based on cover, water conditions, and habitat potential

Background & Partnerships

This program builds on a 10-year initiative at Otty and Wolfe Lakes, originally designed for Bass and Panfish. Wolfe Lake has recently adapted the program for walleye habitat enhancement

Their 2025 event included:

- ~20 drop sites
- 5 Boats
- 10–20 volunteers
- 4–5 hours to complete

Video example from Otty/Wolfe Lake project: https://fb.watch/EDMk19yksB/?fs=e

Support for the GBCLA project include:

- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA)
- Greater Bobs and Crow Lake Association (GBCLA) & Foundation
- Watersheds Canada

Shoal Rock Cleanup Project (Crow Lake):

The Fisheries Committee will also undertake a shoal rehabilitation project in Fall 2026. Enhancing these shoal environments may help create additional viable spawning areas, reducing pressure on existing creeks.

Project Details

- Location: Crow Lake
- Focus: Areas with existing blast rock deposits
- Goal: Improve conditions for:
    - Fish habitat
    - Potential spawning activity

Execution

- Timing: Late September 2026 (low water conditions)
- Crew: GBCLA volunteers
- Support: South Frontenac Fire and Rescue

Conservation Focus

The Fisheries Committee remains committed to:

- Protecting critical spawning habitats
- Supporting sustainable fish populations
- Promoting responsible angling practices
- Increasing awareness of poaching and slot-size regulations

Zone 18: Key Regulations Reminder:

Walleye / Sauger

- Season: Jan 1 – Mar 1; 2nd Saturday in May – Dec 31
- Possession Limits: Sporting Licence-4 / Conservation Licence -2
- Slot Size for keeping a fish: 40–50 cm

Bass

- Season: 3rd Saturday in June – Dec 15
- Possession Limits: Sporting Licence-6 / Conservation Licence -2

Northern Pike

- Season: Jan 1 – Mar 31; mid-May – Dec 31
- Possession Limits: Sporting Licence-6 / Conservation Licence -2

Lake Trout

- Season: Late May – Sept 8
- Possession Limits: Sporting Licence-2 / Conservation Licence -1

Poaching Reporting

Email: Kemptville-Kingston.mnrf@ontario.ca
Hotline: 1-877-847-7667
Always record key details (location, time, license plate, etc.).

Members should never engage suspected poachers directly.

Final Takeaway

The 2026 results are highly encouraging, demonstrating a strong rebound in walleye spawning activity after a challenging 2025 season. Combined with new habitat initiatives like the Christmas Tree Project and shoal restoration efforts, the GBCLA Fisheries Committee is taking meaningful steps to support the long-term sustainability of the Bobs Lake ecosystem.



Water Quality

Water Quality Testing Results

By: Jeff Carabott

The Ontario Lake Partner Program (LPP) has released the Lakes' testing data for 2025. Again, we thank the dedicated group of volunteers who conduct regular water quality testing at various key locations of our lakes, from May through September.

The LPP is a province-wide, volunteer-based, water-quality monitoring program. Volunteers collect total phosphorus samples in May and make monthly water clarity observations on their lakes. This information allows for the early detection of changes in the nutrient status and/or the water clarity of the lake due to the impacts of shoreline development, climate change and other stresses.

Why sample?
Elevated levels of phosphorus can lead to algal blooms and in some cases affect the habitat of cold-water fish such as lake trout. By sampling the total phosphorus in May of each year it is possible to detect a change in the nutrient status of your lake. It is important to note that several years of data must be collected to observe the normal, between year differences before a trend can be identified.

While total phosphorus concentrations are the best way to describe the nutrient status of your lake, regular Secchi disk visibility depths can also help to identify changes in water clarity not linked to nutrient status (zebra mussels, climate change, etc.).

Secchi disk visibility readings are interpreted as follows (the higher the reading, the clearer the water):

- High transparency (Secchi depth >4 m)
- Moderately transparent (Secchi depth 2-4 m)
- Low transparency (Secchi depth 0-2 m)

The Minimum Provincial Water Quality Objective (PWQO) is 2 metres, indicating that water is usually clear and sufficient sunlight can penetrate the water column to support aquatic life.



Location	Avg. Secchi disk 2025(m)	Avg. Secchi disk 2024 (m)	Avg. Secchi disk 2023 (m)	Avg. Secchi disk (m) 1996-2021
Buck Bay	3.6	4.8	5.3	4.4
East Basin	4.3	4.7	4.5	5.5
Crow Bay	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.4
Ctrl Narrows	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.4
Green Bay	5.1*	4.5*	5.7	6.0
Long Bay	4.4	4.9	4.1	4.6
Mill Bay	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.1
Mud Bay	4.4	5.6	6.4	5.3
Norris Bay	5.0	5.7	5.1	4.8
West Basin	4.1	4.4*	3.7	4.5
Crow Lake	5.5	4.7	6.3	5.2

**Note, in the absence of any recorded LPP data for a particular testing site in the following charts, we have utilized Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) Watershed Watch test data from 2024.*

Herlehy
Home
building centre
10062 Perth Rd, Westport, ON
K0G 1X0
homehardware.ca
Call (613) 273-2052



Total Phosphorus (TP) readings are measured in micrograms per litre (ug/L), and are interpreted as follows (generally, the lower the reading, the clearer the water):

- 10 micrograms per litre or less – oligotrophic, few nutrients
- 10 – 20 micrograms per litre – mesotrophic, moderately enriched
- 20 micrograms per litre or more – eutrophic, enriched, higher levels of nutrients

Location	Avg. TP (ug/L) 2025	Avg. TP (ug/L) 2024	Avg. TP (ug/L) 2002-2023*	Avg. TP (ug/L) Pre-2002
Buck Bay	10.3	9.3	10.1	9.0
East Basin	9.9	9.3	8.7	11.0
Crow Bay	13.4	11.7	9.1	7.0
Ctrl Narrows	16.4	10.2	9.5	11.0
Green Bay	7.5	8.8	8.5	11.0
Long Bay	10.4	9.5	9.0	16.0
Mill Bay	11.6	14.9	15.6	17.0
Mud Bay	8.2	7.6	8.1	8.0
Norris Bay	11.9	9.4	9.2	14.0
West Basin	12.0	10.2	11.7	10.0
Crow Lake	10.6	8.2	9.0	9.0

* Outliers not included

The LPP Annual Report may be downloaded by visiting the FOCA website: https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-sampling-assistance/





Calcium and Zebra Mussels

Calcium, at a concentration of 20mg/l, allows zebra mussels to more likely establish colonies and complete their life cycle. Green Bay data indicates calcium levels exceeding 20mg/l. While calcium was below the threshold of 20 mg/l in all other bays as well as in Crow Lake, concentrations are close to meeting this point (>17mg/l).

Zebra mussels have well established colonies in Mud Bay and have been observed in all other areas. **Therefore, it is important property owners and users of the lake remain vigilant in protecting against the spread of this invasive species, particularly at public access points.**

Boats, fishing gear, and other recreational equipment **should always be cleaned and inspected** before entering a different water body, to minimize the spread of invasive species. Drain water from the motor, live well, bilge and transom wells while on land. For more information, please visit www.invadingspecies.com.

RVCA Water Quality & E.coli Testing

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) once again conducted water clarity and E.coli bacteria testing in 2025, as part of their Watershed Watch program. Overall results for both lakes are good.

Great news, E. coli, a measure used to assess the suitability for recreational use, was below the Provincial Water Quality Objective (PWQO) of 100 colony forming units per 100ml (CFU/100ml) maximum at all sites in both lakes.

Our watershed experienced significant low-water conditions during the 2025 season, which may be reflected negatively in the results. Lower water levels may have also limited Fall sampling in some locations due to unsafe launch conditions.

Average nutrient parameters, total phosphorus (TP) and total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) were below their respective PWQO maximum objectives of 20 ug/l (0.020 mg/l) and 500 ug/l (0.500 mg/l) at all sites. Historically, the highest average concentrations in Bobs Lake on an annual basis are observed in Mill Bay, due in major part to the shallowness of the water level.

For more information, see the RVCA Surface Water Quality website.

Marine Safety

Marine Safety Committee

By: Dick Johnston, Director of Marine Safety

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM TRANSPORT CANADA REGARDING PLEASURE CRAFT LICENSES (PCL):

In Canada, if you are using your pleasure craft for recreation, you require a Pleasure Craft License if it meets both of the following criteria: it has one or more engines totaling 10 horsepower (7.5kw), even temporarily; and is principally operated and maintained in Canadian waters.

A Pleasure Craft License is an official document that assigns a unique number to your boat, which must be shown clearly on both sides of its bow. A copy of the PCL must always be carried on the pleasure craft.

Recent changes, as of January 6, 2026, require that all new, transferred, and renewed Pleasure Craft License be valid for 5 years. The fee to apply is $24.41. You must update your license information within 30 days of transfer or renewal.

Older licenses originally issued without an expiry date now have an expiry date. Transport Canada determined the date. A license issue dated January 1, 1975, to December 31, 1985, now has an expiry date of December 31, 2026.

Note: if your issue date was December 31, 1974, or earlier your expiry date is March 31, 2026.

To get a full understanding of the reasons for the new license requirements and to check your current license expiry date, go to the Transport Canada web site and search 'Apply for or manage a Pleasure Craft License (PCL)'. Under Expiry Date there is a link to 'check your expiry date' using your Pleasure Craft License. When I used my PCL for this process, I quickly received an answer showing the upcoming expiry date.





5 Things Your Kids Need Before Driving A Boat

By: Robin McHugh

In Canada, you have to be 16 to legally operate a personal watercraft (PWC). But kids of any age can drive a motorized boat of some kind, even unsupervised. That doesn't mean your five-year-old can take you waterskiing at sunset. In most of the country, unsupervised kids younger than 12 can only operate a boat engine under 10 hp (7.5 kW). Kids 12–15 can move up to a 40 hp (30 kW) engine. But let's take a step back. Here are a few things your burgeoning boaters need before they go out on their own:

1) A Pleasure Craft Operator Card

Anyone operating a motorized boat must carry this card, a.k.a. a boating licence. There's no exception for tiny humans, tiny boats, or tiny motors (even silent electric trolling motors). Passing the written test is no easy feat—the GB Squad kids agree that everyone fails at least once. "I got mine when I was nine,' says Izzy, bragging a little. "I flexed that at school." The National Marine Manufacturers Association advises parents to start teaching boat safety rules early. Young children enjoy learning what channel markers, signs, and boat lights mean.

2) Lessons

Beyond a written test, the Canadian Safe Boating Council recommends new boaters also take an on-the-water course. Tricky docking manoeuvres, navigating busy channels, and shallow-water boating are all better learned in practice. Of course, you can teach your kids driving skills yourself too.

3) Sobriety

Whether or not your tweens and teens have experimented with alcohol or cannabis yet, it's essential that they understand the gravity of impaired driving. Have a serious conversation and be sure to always model the behaviour you want to see; research shows parents are actually the most important influence on whether teens drink, says parenting expert Alyson Schafer.

4) PFDs

According to the Canadian Red Cross, nearly 90 per cent of boaters who drowned were not wearing (or not properly wearing) a lifejacket. Kids need a PFD that fits well and is comfortable enough to wear all the time. The GB Squad kids always wear their PFDs in the boat—it's non-negotiable. Like any rule, this one has more sticking power because their parents always wear PFDs too, with zero exceptions.

5) Preparation

Make sure that the boat has safety equipment, enough fuel, and there's a charged cell phone in someone's pocket. Check the weather forecast and let someone on shore know where you're headed and when you'll return.

This article was originally published in the August 2023 issue of Cottage Life.



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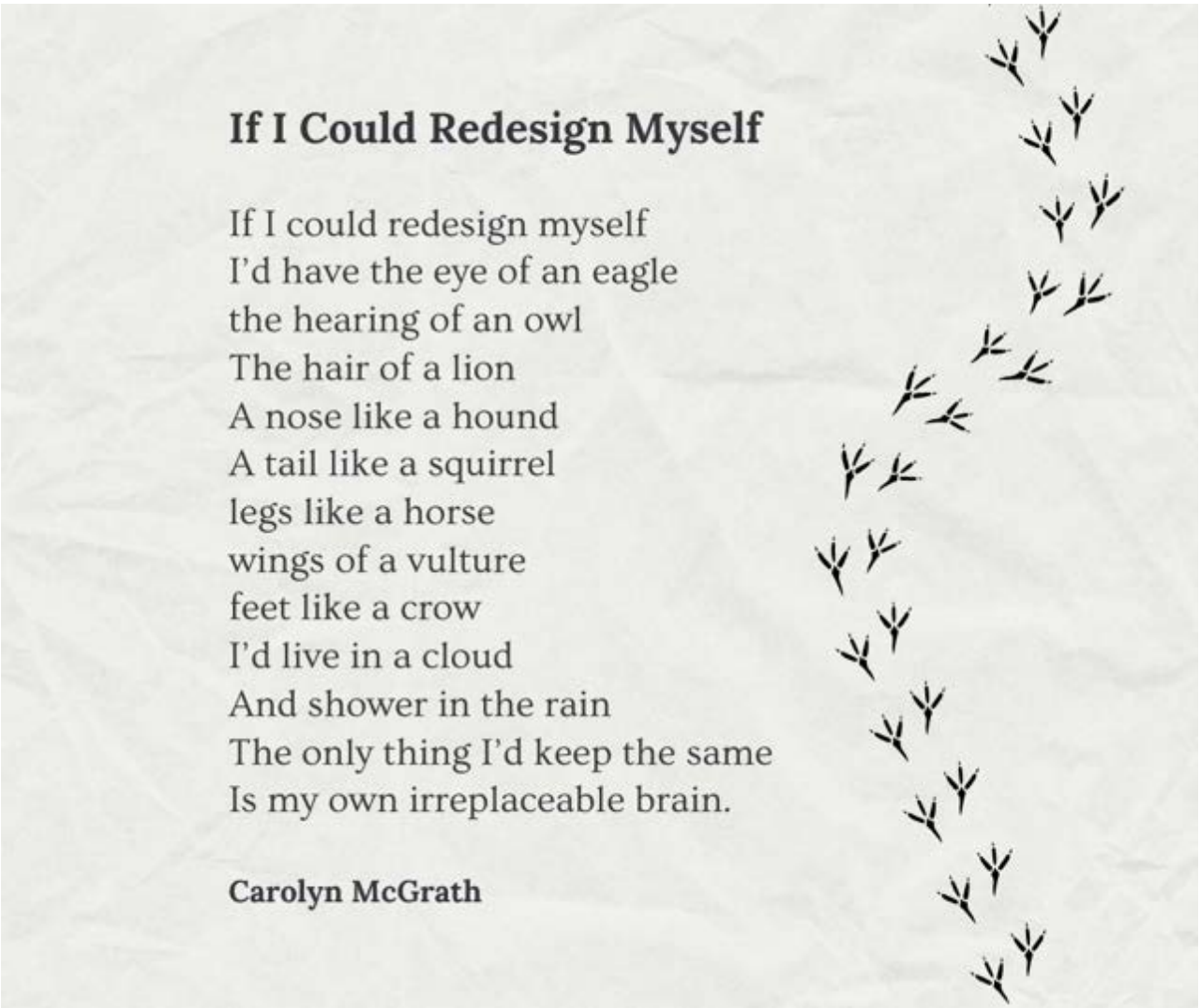
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SOUTH FRONTENAC

Lake Resident Interest Pieces



If I Could Redesign Myself

If I could redesign myself
I'd have the eye of an eagle
the hearing of an owl
The hair of a lion
A nose like a hound
A tail like a squirrel
legs like a horse
wings of a vulture
feet like a crow
I'd live in a cloud
And shower in the rain
The only thing I'd keep the same
Is my own irreplaceable brain.

Carolyn McGrath

Abiding

"Over my long, and often disheartening process of orientation, my constant joy was our new land. That first winter a ghostly owl stayed nearby, haunting the valley, often roosting on an elm which overhung the road near our new home. Rare to eastern Ontario, this *Great Grey* had fled south from a scarcity in her arctic territory to search for more food. Almost all huge, feathered eyes, the immense, assured presence seemingly stood by us, letting us approach nearly within touching distance to watch the swivel of her remarkable head. Then, with the coming of March, she drifted back north to her traditional hunting grounds, leaving us stronger than when she first appeared.

***

On a day when large flakes of sugar snow were flying down, I stood watching the plump, brown tree sparrows flitting through a tangle of grape vines. I listened to the clamour of approaching blue jays, hurrying in across the valley to our now familiar feeders. Newly returned wild geese rose up from the still half-frozen water meadow, their calls echoing from the surrounding hills which held us all.
Slowly, clumsily, I was making my way towards wholeness. I had come here to learn to live in deepest kinship with the land. And in its own way and time, Singing Meadow was gathering me, weaving me into its whole.

What started me thinking that day was a meeting with our old friend, Bob Prevost, who was newly well after a long struggle with cancer. Naturally, given that it was March, the talk turned to syrup making. "When I was sickest, last year," he told me, "My brother took me out to our sugar bush. I couldn't help any, of course, but I just needed to be there. You know what I mean? I even slept over on those cold, spring nights." After that he asked how we were fitting in with our new home and was pleased that we had found the land we needed. For Bob and me, as it was for Thoreau, our real life was outside. "How could you go to sleep not hearing the whip-poor-will?" he asks. "That was what got me well again."

Now I was walking slowly down to the water meadow, hearing the strange, quarrelsome-sounding talk of herons beginning another season here. Living here, I was surrounded by everchanging water—ponds and pools and springs and rivulets, all running under and around me, all moving towards nearby Bobs Lake. Meanwhile, I was teaching myself how to be aware every moment of every step so I could keep walking longer on this rough land.

With any luck, this beloved place would be my last home. And, after the unignorable message of recent fierce summers, I was here to bear witness, to stand with the great maples, beeches and oaks through whatever might come, to accompany with as great a grace as I could for as long as I could sustain it.

Soon, it would be time to go indoors again to our welcoming new home. But only for a while. Sometimes, though, I had a new dream. No longer here in body, I was floating, reduced purely to tenderness, brooding the land with my great love."



For thirty years, Peri McQuay and her husband Barry lived and worked at Foley Mountain, an 800-acre conservation area of forest, ponds, and granite ridges, overlooking Westport, Ontario,

Abiding is an excerpt from Peri McQuay's most recent book, *Singing Meadow, the adventure of creating a country home, which tells the story of how Peri and her nature educator husband Barry discovered their land with access to the northern end of Bobs Lake and designed and had built a house there.*

For more about Peri see her newsletter and website: www.perimcquay.ca

Rekindling A Relationship With The Lake

By: Larry Walsh

My parents along with my four sisters including my twin sis started going to Canada in 1964. Our first trip was to Whitefish Lake which was close to Ottawa. Dad had to stop at a pharmacy in Ottawa on way because my oldest sister had an earache. I don't recall much about this trip: I was 7.

The following year we went to Bob's Lake for the first time. Mom told Dad Whitefish Lake was too far and he had to find something closer, so he sent away for some magazines and he saw Bob's Lake in an advertisement for Howard's Camp on Green Bay.



With Mr, McCoy and his daughter. The McCoys stayed in Cabin 9.

Howard's Camp had nine cottages when we first went; we stayed in cottages number 7 & 8. We always went the last two weeks of July.

When we first went, dad had a Boston Whaler. Dad was a walleye fisherman and that's what I grew to love. My parents befriended a few families from Great Bend, PA and Binghamton, NY. The one friend was a parole officer just like my dad and they hit it off well along with the other families.



As a long man boating on Green Bay

I have so many good memories of Bob's Lake. I can never share them all here, but some are when my dad and I went down to the dam, quite the adventure on our Duranaut 14 with a 9-1/2 Johnson.

The owners of Howard's were Ken and Alta Howard. They were from Binghamton, New York. Ken was a quiet man and Alta was the boss. She was quite the character but very nice and very good to all of us. Bob's Lake has always been an excellent fishing lake. When I was 10, I caught seven walleyes all in the same location on an orange flatfish with black dots. Dad didn't catch anything that day.

One of the special moments at Bob's was in 1969 watching the moon landing on a black-and-white TV with all the other people from other cabins watching it outside. Other times we used to take trips on a rainy day and go to Westport or Perth and stop at the cheese factory.

We also loved going to Sam Barr's store for ice cream and to Babcock's store a few miles before Howard's which let us know we were close to our destination.

I don't remember the exact year we stopped going. I believe it was in '75, but my parents still went and I would come up every other year for a few years and then when I got married and had children, we never made it up.

It was about 30 years later I decided I wanted to go back to Bob's Lake and I looked up my dad's friends who used to stay in other cabins and I got a hold of them via email and found out that they still went to Canada and that they had bought property next-door to Howard's Camp. So, in 2007 I made my first trip back and my wife and I met up with my dad's friends. The last time I had seen these people I was like 22 and here it is 30 years later. It was quite the reunion.

We ended up going back in 2016. I got engaged to my wife Michelle in Ottawa. My other wife had passed away. We stayed in a different cabin and the camp is now called Irwin's. They are great hosts and we had a wonderful time. When I was fishing for walleye, I caught the biggest fish by accident, a 37-inch northern pike.



With old friends, 2016



Then



Now

Larry Walsh currently lives in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He and his twin, Joanie, share great memories of the lake. He has two sons (with 4 children) who live in San Diego, and 3 step children. He and Michelle have 8 grandchildren.

Stargazing At The Lake

By: Jeff Carabott

The night skies around Bobs and Crow Lakes are a wonderful place to experience the wonders of our galaxy. We are fortunate to have some of the darkest skies in Eastern Ontario, which offer magical views of the Milky Way, constellations, planets and much, much more.

Nothing is required other than your own eyes, but of course any pair of binoculars will provide more detail and additional targets. If you can, attach your binoculars to a tripod or monopod to steady the view and be more comfortable. As an alternative, use a zero-gravity chair, or even lay on a child's inflatable raft pulled up on shore.

Dress appropriately for the temperature, and don't forget the bug spray! Allow 20-30 minutes for your eyes to adjust to the dark and preserve your night vision by using only red flashlights (or cover a white flashlight lens with red cellophane or even red nail polish). Don't forget to shut off your outdoor lights and, whenever possible, install / aim light fixtures downward to reduce light pollution for yourself and your neighbours.

While the Moon itself is an object of fascination worthy of detailed exploration, the best dark night for general observation is when you cannot see the Moon at all (called a new Moon). When observing the Moon with binoculars, concentrate on the terminator (the line between darkness and sunlight) for the extra dramatic effect of crater and mountain shadows.



Highlights for this summer include:

- In June, Mars, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are found in the early eastern morning sky. On June 8-9, there is a stunning conjunction of our solar system's two brightest planets, Jupiter and Venus, in the western sky soon after sunset. On June 16, the thin waxing crescent Moon will appear near Venus, Jupiter, and Mercury after sunset for about a week (look near the horizon).

- In July, test your eyesight by trying to see both Alcor and Mizar (a close pair of stars in the Big Dipper's handle -- second from the end) with your naked eye. Use binoculars if you cannot separate the pair unaided.

- Throughout July and August, look to the south to view rich constellations towards the centre of our Milky Way galaxy.



- August 12-13, the Perseids meteor shower peaks, with up to potentially 120 meteors per hour. Fortunately, this year, a new Moon will be occurring during this time, so the darker skies will be optimal for spotting meteors!

- On August 28, a deep partial lunar eclipse can be seen, peaking at 12:12am.

- The Sun is currently experiencing a period of near-peak solar activity (an 11-year cycle). Much as it was last year, the opportunity to observe Northern Lights should be particularly good this summer. Download Apps such as *My Aurora Forecast & Alerts* or *Aurora Alerts Canada* to set up your own alerts for your area. Remember that dim aurora activity can be made much more visible by capturing an image with your cellphone camera, especially a phone with a night or astrophoto mode. These modes can also be great to capture stunning Milky Way images (be sure to use a tripod for best results).



We are also fortunate to be within about a one-hour drive from two dark sky viewing areas, both of which schedule public events:

- North Frontenac Astronomy Park, north of Sharbot Lake, near Plevna
  https://www.northfrontenac.com/en/open-for-business/north-frontenac-astronomy-park.aspx

- Lennox & Addington Dark Sky Viewing Area, 37km north of Napanee
  https://naturallyla.ca/explore/dark-sky-viewing-area-lennox-addington/

I would encourage you to download any free astronomy / stargazing app, such as Stellarium Mobile, Skyview Lite, or Star Walk 2, to learn more about the night sky and easily identify what you can see simply by looking up.

Clear skies and happy stargazing!